

IN SITU BURNING OF OIL SPILLS

**WORKSHOP
PROCEEDINGS**

**NEW ORLEANS, LA
NOVEMBER 2-4, 1998**

*William D. Walton and
Nora H. Jason, Editors*



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NOTICE

The statements and conclusions of this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

COVER

U.S. Coast Guard and Minerals Management Service sponsored fire-resistant oil spill containment boom performance test using a non-commercial test boom at the Coast Guard Fire and Safety Test Detachment, Mobile, AL, August 1997. William D. Walton, Photographer.

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IN SITU BURNING OF OIL SPILLS WORKSHOP
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INTRODUCTION

The Minerals Management Service (MMS), U.S. Department of Interior, is designated as the lead agency for *in situ* burn research in the Oil Pollution Research and Technology Plan prepared under the authority of Title VII of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA-90). In response to MMS's continuing effort to ensure the relevance of their research program to the needs of the user community, a workshop on *in situ* burning of oil spills was hosted by MMS in 1994 to present the state of the knowledge and identify research needs.¹ Since that time, significant advances in the acceptance and application of *in situ* burning as an oil spill mitigation method have been made, in part as a result of the MMS-funded research program. As a result of widespread preapproval of *in situ* burning and advances in the technology, MMS hosted this follow-on workshop to update the state of knowledge and the research needs of the user community.

The goals of the *In Situ* Burning of Oil Spills Workshop were:

1. To present the state of knowledge to decision makers from local, state and federal agencies, responders, environmentalists, academia, industry and the user community.
2. To prioritize research and information needs to support decisions on the use of *in situ* burning of oil spills.

The introductory speaker presented a historical perspective covering the more than forty years since the first documented use of *in situ* burning. It was noted that until about 1990, most of the research consisted of observations. After that time scientific principles were seriously applied to the analysis of *in situ* burning. A presentation followed that indicated that some form of preapprovals for *in situ* burning was in place for almost all areas of the United States. The remaining presentations focused on the operational aspects of *in situ* burning including the window of opportunity, fireboom testing, training and preparedness, monitoring and modeling, alternative approaches and inland/fresh water burning. These presentations highlighted the advances in the preparedness for and technology of *in situ* burning made in the past five years.

¹ Jason, Nora H., ed., *In Situ* Burning Oil Spill, Workshop Proceedings, Nat. Inst. Stds. and Tech., Spec. Pub. 867, 1994 August, 101 p.

The workshop attendees were invited to participate in two breakout discussion panels. One focused on environmental and human health issues and the other on operations issues. The panels reviewed the recommendations from the 1994 workshop and the presentations. From this information and the experiences of the participants, a list of needs and potential methods of implementation was developed. The priorities were determined by a vote of the panel participants. Although the panels focused primarily on their assigned topics, both panels found there was a similar need to improve education, communications and training at wide variety of levels. The recommendations of both panels were combined on this topic.

This Proceedings is the official transmittal of the workshop presentations and recommendations to the sponsor, Minerals Management Service, Department of Interior. It reflects the combined input of the workshop participants and not necessarily the views of the Minerals Management Service. The panel recommendations and the individual papers are presented following this Introduction.